

2015 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE



SHARING THE WORD — Jonathan Falwell, senior pastor of Thomas Road Church, Lynchburg, Va., brings the message during the morning session of the 2015 State Evangelism Conference at Brandon Church, Brandon. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Gathering draws worshippers

Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Hundreds of participants gathered January 25 - 26 at Brandon Church, Brandon, for the 2015 State Evangelism Conference, sponsored by the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. At times, chairs had to be set up inside the halls outside the church's worship center because of the overflow crowds.

"One of the high points for me was the sense that more pastors have put the Evangelism Conference on their radars this year," said Don Lum, director of the Evangelism Department. "We had more pastors attend."

see EVANGELISM on p. 6



WORSHIPPING TOGETHER — Lavon Gray, First Church, Jackson, leads the participants at the 2015 State Evangelism Conference in singing. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Mormons offer to support LGBT cause

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), also popularly known as the Mormon Church, will support civil rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender (LGBT) people if religious freedom protections also are ensured, its leaders announced Jan. 27.

In a Salt Lake City news conference, Mormon leaders described their stance as "fairness

for all," or a "balanced approach between religious and gay rights" that endorses protections in housing, employment, and public transportation for LGBT people and, at the same time, safeguards the rights of religious institutions and people.

The Mormons' newly announced support for LGBT rights legislation throughout the country followed its endorsement of a similar Salt Lake City ordinance

in 2009. Mormon leaders said they were able to support the city measure because it adequately protected religious freedom.

This approach does not represent a change in doctrine but a desire "to encourage mutually respectful dialogue in what has become a highly polarized national debate," Mormon leaders said. They included no mention of

see CAUSE on p. 7

Alabama to soon issue same sex marriage licenses?

MOBILE, Ala. (BP and local reports) — A key judicial organization in Alabama announced Jan. 28 that it believes a federal judge's ruling striking down the state's gay marriage ban could require probate judges to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples as early as Monday.

Following U.S. District Judge Callie V.S. Granade's Jan. 23 ruling that the Sanctity of Marriage Amendment to Alabama's constitution violates the federal constitution, the Alabama Probate Judges Association (APJA) issued a statement claiming the ruling only applied to "parties in the case" and did not require its members to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples.

However, a clarification issued by Granade Jan. 28 led the judges' organization to change its mind. APJA president Greg Norris said in a statement that the association now believes its members could be required to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples beginning Feb. 9, when a stay of Granade's ruling to allow time for an appeal expires.

Granade was nominated to the federal judgeship in 2001 by U.S. President George W. Bush.

"It is the opinion of the association, on the advice of legal counsel, that until the stay is lifted, probate judges cannot issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples," said Norris, probate judge in Monroe County. "However, on the occasion that the stay is lifted, same-sex couples may apply for marriage licenses."

Granade's clarification recounted the APJA's initial denial that judges would be required to sanction homosexual marriages and then noted, "Because the court has entered a stay of the Judgment in this case, neither the named Defendant [Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange], nor the Probate Courts in Alabama are currently required to follow or uphold the Judgment."

"However, if the stay is lifted, the Judgment in this case makes it clear that the Sanctity of Marriage Amendment and the Alabama Marriage Protection Act are unconstitutional because they violate the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment," Granade wrote.

In related news, Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore sent a letter to the state's governor, Robert Bentley, on Jan. 27 stating that Moore would "continue to recognize the Alabama Constitution and the will of the people overwhelmingly expressed in the Sanctity of Marriage Amendment."

Moore added that "nothing in the United States Constitution grants the federal government the authority to redefine the institution of marriage," according to a report on al.com.

Moore noted at the end of his letter to Bentley, "I ask you to continue to uphold and support the Alabama Constitution with respect to marriage, both for the welfare of this state and for our posterity. Be assured that I stand with you to stop judicial tyranny and any unlawful opinions issued without constitutional authority."

Bentley issued a statement expressing his support of the marriage amendment. "The people of Alabama voted in a constitutional amendment to define marriage as being between man and woman. As governor, I must uphold the Constitution. I am disappointed in Friday's ruling, and I will continue to oppose this ruling. The Federal government must not interfere on the rights of states."

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Ready to pay up?

Yawn. Here we go again: Have you heard? Procter and Gamble is full of Satan worshippers. The company president said so, on television! Don't believe it? Just look at their logo!

A statement similar to that a few years ago cost four Utah residents \$19.25 million. That's the amount Procter and Gamble, the nation's largest consumer products company, was awarded by a federal jury in Salt Lake City. Unless you have a similar amount of money from which you don't mind soon being parted, perhaps you should take heed.

First of all, the age-old rumor about Satanism, Procter and Gamble, and its famous moon-and-stars logo is a lie. Pure and simple. If you repeat it, you're a liar. If you're a Christian and you repeat it, you'd better check up on what the Bible has to say about false witness.

The mess in Utah began when Randy L. Haugen circulated another person's Satanism rumor about Procter and Gamble through an automated phone message system. As distribution of the rumor multiplied beyond anything Haugen probably could have imagined, a version of it inevitably turned up at Procter and Gamble headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Companies take their public image seriously — especially so at Procter and Gamble. "This is about protecting our reputation," Jim Johnson, Procter and Gamble's chief legal counsel at the time, told Associated Press.

Another rumor that never seems to die is the old saw that the famed atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair is working to get all Christian programming removed from television. Again, not true. Such a feat would be hard to accomplish from the grave, where her remains have resided since she was murdered in 1995.

The latest variation of the endless O'Hair tale involves James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family and now retired. So rampant was that rumor that the Focus on the Family web site

carried a special disclaimer that Dobson and Focus on the Family were not involved in any way in authenticating and distributing the O'Hair rumor.

Simply put, you can't believe everything you hear and read — especially on the Internet. It is a rare week that the offices of The Baptist Record fail to receive a frantic e-mail or phone call about the latest such threat to Christianity. All of them — all — turn out to be rumors.

Christians should be smarter than that. It does not elevate our Kingdom work nor glorify our Savior to spread baseless rumors and indulge ear-tickling lies. Such behavior actually diminishes our witness by proving that we're no different than the world when it comes to truth, gossip, and rumor-mongering.

This is especially the case when there are so many ways open to us to check out these rumors. The first way is to visit the company's web site or call their toll-free customer service telephone number. Chances are, you won't be the first call they receive.

Secondly, there are many good Internet sites (not necessarily Christian) that research and refute such rumors. Two such sites are snopes.com, and urbanlegends.about.com. Anyone with a computer and two minutes of free time can avail themselves of these free services.

Thirdly, the mass media are frequently full of articles and reports that explode these rumors. All we need to do is pay attention.

Don't fall for rumors, some of which are undoubtedly designed and promulgated by detractors of our faith with the intention of making Christians look bad. Any amount of time we devote to such fruitless activities takes away from the time we could be accomplishing Kingdom work.

If we're not focused on Jesus and Kingdom work, then why are we Christians?

Editor's note: Updated and reprinted from an earlier issue of The Baptist Record.

Appreciate your pastor's wife

What does the ideal pastor's wife look like? Believe it or not, every pastor's wife is one of a kind.

She's definitely not a clone of your previous pastor's wife or any other pastor's wife, you know. God created her uniquely — her personality, giftedness, style, strengths, and weaknesses. Don't fall for the rumor that there's a cookie-cutter mold for the ideal pastor's wife.



Guest opinion
with Diana Davis

I've known and observed hundreds of effective pastors' wives, and can assure you that no two are alike! I know awesome pastor's wives who are tall, short, old, young, introverted, and extroverted. She may wear a ponytail, pixie cut, or dreadlocks. Some wear hats or have tattoos or pierced ears. There are pastor's wives who run marathons, barrel race, coach, hunt, garden, golf, and raise goats.

Some are factory workers, homemakers, teachers, doctors, or antique dealers. They're salespeople, office workers, home decorators, RNs, CPAs, CEOs, and EMTs. Some have a GED. Others a PhD. They're coaches, entrepreneurs, mechanics, and knitters. They're on city councils, Parent Teacher Organization boards, neighborhood watch teams, and bowling leagues. They attend book clubs, yard sales, cattle auctions, and college classes.

They live on farms or in condos, mobile homes, parsonages, and neighborhoods. They're childless, parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, great-grandparents. They're vegetarians, foodies, volunteers, drummers, soccer moms, readers, writers, and artists. They're biscuit burners and gourmet chefs. Some even play the piano.

Each has a distinct background and Christian testimony. Their individual ministries within God's church vary enormously, from behind-the-scenes support to upfront leadership. The list could go on, but you get the point.

Each pastor's wife is truly unique — like you! She loves her God and His church. In fact, she's given her life to

serving alongside your pastor. God has not called her to meet the expectations of church members, but to live for Him and serve Him exactly as He's gifted and called her.

If you get right down to it, there are only two requirements for an ideal pastor's wife. First, she's a child of God — an imperfect sinner saved by His grace. Like you and me, her life is dedicated to the Savior. Second, she's married to the pastor. She's the only woman in the entire world who's qualified to be that pastor's wife.

How can you, personally, encourage your pastor's wife? Try one of these ideas:

- Notice how she encourages her husband in ministry. Compliment her privately.
- Be her great cheerleader. Always have a good word to say about her.
- Be aware that a great deal of her ministry work may be behind the scenes.
- Show interest and encouragement in her outside-the-church involvements. Understand that God works through every area of her life.
- Say "thank you" occasionally. She joyfully carries many extra responsibilities and burdens.

You can uplift your church and pastor's ministry by loving and accepting his wife. Will you encourage your pastor's wife today?

Davis, on the Web at dianadavis.org, is an author, columnist, and ministry wife in Pensacola FL. Her commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

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'Pop Up Church' offers unique way to build relationships

PHOENIX (BP) — At Fair Trade Cafe in downtown Phoenix, the Big Game down the road in University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale seemed to be the last thing on Jim Helman's mind.

Customers sipped espressos and chatted at the popular coffee shop while Helman and a few fellow Christians had something else brewing just outside in the open courtyard. At a glance, one might think the band warming up was preparing to merely entertain customers but a closer look and listen revealed a Sunday evening church service was about to "pop up."

Helman, pastor of Downtown Phoenix Church (also called DTPHX Church), says instead of waiting for people to come to them, Pop Up Church helps believers take the Gospel to the community.

Since April 2014, Helman has led the church with a focus on reaching the city's millennial crowd — those born in the '80s and '90s — and others he refers to as the "nones" and "dones" (those who don't claim any particular faith or have quit going to church).

Helman and his wife Colleen, who live in an apartment downtown, both have a heart for the people in the area. Prior to planting the church, Helman had served as a worship pastor at North Phoenix Church for more than 30 years. Though the empty nesters initially considered international mission work a few years ago, Helman said they saw God opening doors for ministry in their home city.

In an increasingly post-Christian culture, Helman said, church buildings and typical approaches to worship are not attracting many young adults in the downtown Phoenix area. "They don't think about going to church on Sunday morning any more than you and I think about going to

bingo on Friday nights. It's just not on the radar, so rather than trying to be separate from all of that, we try to be a part of that but... if you come in with some kind of agenda, they'll be able to tell right away."

The church tries to keep it simple, he said, with a focus on building relationships within one square mile of the downtown area. Then through those relationships, the church utilizes spaces that are already being used in the community.

Pop Up Church typically meets every other week, usually the second and fourth weekends, and then uses the other two weekends to serve in the area.

One week the church might meet at a coffee shop, park, or even a jazz club. The next week the church could be handing out sandwiches to those in need. The church also is heavily involved with ministering to students at the Arizona State University (ASU) downtown campus.

Those who attend regularly can follow the church through its website and app. "We don't have a building, we have an app," Helman joked.

Building real friendships is critical to Pop Up Church, he said. It's about "coming alongside [locals] and supporting a lot of the great things they do... especially in a thriving area like the downtown area and then just being a part of their lives first."

The partnership with Fair Trade Cafe started through simple conversations and acts of service. Helman helped the owner repair her chairs and offered suggestions on improving the cafe's lighting.

Relationships and ministry take time to develop, he said. "Then you earn the right to say something about your faith. You earn the right to have a conversation about their faith and take it from there."



MONTY PATTON

Super Bowl gone, but witness still needed in Phoenix area

PHOENIX (BP) — As the bright lights and hoopla surrounding Super Bowl XLIX in the Phoenix area last weekend begin to fade, local Southern Baptists are quick to point out the city is in desperate need of new evangelistic churches.

According to the Center for Missional Research at the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB), evangelicals make up only 12.6% of the population of the Send North America: Phoenix region. The metro area also has only one Southern Baptist church for every 19,338 people, but in the last few years an influx of Southern Baptist church planters has begun to turn those numbers around.

Phoenix is one of 32 Send North America cities that have become a church planting focus since NAMB launched the strategy at the 2011 Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix. The sixth-largest city in the United States, metro Phoenix counts nearly 5.4 million people as residents.

When planter Jason Griffin arrived with his family of six in Phoenix in 2012, he didn't relocate for the nice weather or the long list of leisure activities. Underneath all the fun and sun, the Griffins found a community named Surprise that needed the Gospel.

"There have been a lot of people who have tried to plant here," said Griffin, who was sent by First Church of Woodstock, Ga. "For whatever reason — whether it was never gaining traction or losing their support — this became like a graveyard for church plants."

Griffin estimates that 95%

"For our planters to know that they have people all over the country praying for them and adopting them as their own, that's huge... It shows the community that the church isn't just an independent entity, but it's an interdependent one."

Monty Patton

NAMB's Send City missionary for Phoenix

of Surprise residents are not connected to evangelical churches. Nobody showed up for the first Bible study he launched in his home a few months after his arrival but after starting weekly worship services in January 2013, Griffin has seen Freedom Valley Church grow to an average of 120 in attendance most weeks.

"We've seen 15 people come to faith in Christ," Griffin said. "I'll tell you, the amount of work to see those 15 people come to Christ is incredible. It takes consistent relationship building, talking about the Gospel, and living out the Gospel."

Monty Patton, NAMB's Send City missionary for Phoenix, said the city's famous good weather can be a hindrance to church planting efforts. "One of the blessings of our area is our climate, but it's also one of our greatest hindrances," said

Patton, who planted Mountain Ridge Community Church in Glendale in 1996.

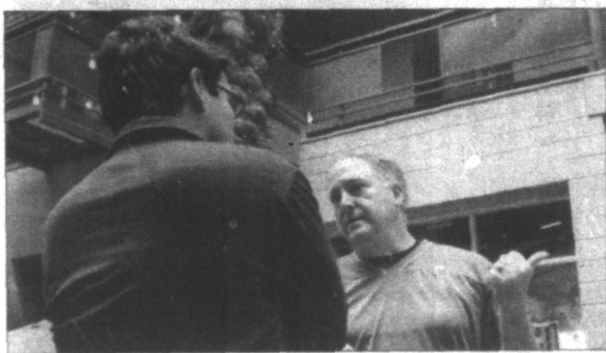
"Everybody is outside. We're a very outdoor city and we're very active. It's a barrier. They do everything outside. Kids are playing softball or soccer 12 months a year. It never stops."

To push back lostness in Phoenix, Patton said local churches will need the help and partnership of congregations elsewhere. Because the area has relatively few evangelical churches and even fewer Southern Baptist congregations, church planters in particular need to know they have the support of other churches.

"For our planters to know that they have people all over the country praying for them and adopting them as their own, that's huge. Plus, it shows the community we're a bigger family," Patton said. "It shows the community that the church isn't just an independent entity, but it's an interdependent one."

Patton said God has provided a great crop of church planters to the area in recent years, yet the city needs more.

"We are at a crossroads of opportunity. The whole world [looked] to Phoenix for the Super Bowl. Phoenix is a great city with a lot of opportunities. If we take advantage of the opportunity the Father has so graciously given us, we could really make a big impact, but if we miss this and don't get the support — the prayer support in particular — and the teams and the planters, we're going to miss a whole new generation in this city."



WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE — Jim Helman (right), pastor of Downtown Phoenix Church, talks with a visitor during Pop Up Church at Fair Trade Cafe in Phoenix. (BP photo)

I'm sure that very few people would think that colds, the flu and other related winter illnesses have anything to do with church, theology, or following Jesus. But since these things so often and so profoundly affect many of our people, it does have something to do with serving the Lord. Some believe that they build a cocoon of faith around themselves and ward off anything that is going to come and affect them physically, but on the other hand, sometimes they catch something and the infection they have gets through the barrier to affect other folks. I just have to believe and know that sometimes God's protective hand is upon my life and so many of yours, but then I find I come down with some fever or choking cough. I would prefer to keep it to myself and others would appreciate if I would keep it also. Since we have some weather and weariness to go through before we get to the beautiful days of spring, let me encourage you to think about how we approach these sickness issues.

It's early 2015 and the flu epidemic has hit our nation hard. One of the states included as having a serious outbreak of the flu is Mississippi, though in fact nearly the whole nation is being affected. I have just had a conversation today with several pastors who were telling me about how many scores of people in their church were out the previous Sunday because of the flu. I've known of several pastors themselves who could not attend church and preach because they were so sick. One pastor and his wife and their children, all, were down with the flu. While the health experts encourage everybody to get a flu shot, this year they turned around and said that if you got it, it may not help because the shot is not a good match for the strain of flu that's affecting so many people. Some hospitals across the nation were unable to take any more patients because they are filled with people who are extremely sick with the flu. And it's not as though the flu is some insignificant sniffle, for the numbers continue to mount as hundreds of people young



Sneezing, Wheezing and Believing

and old are dying from the flu outbreak. I have known of very few times through the years that churches or schools or businesses ever closed because of the flu outbreak, but it is certainly a serious and sobering quandary with which to deal. So, if you took the shot and it is not particularly effective and you have responsibilities at work or at school or at church, what do you do? I'm not much of a germaphobe, but I do realize that it's almost impossible to run and hide from germs and especially the flu bug. You will find it probably everywhere you go — to the store, the gas station, school, work, a ballgame, a family gathering, or, of course, church.

Now the church has its own set of problems when it comes to the spread of these kind of diseases because we are so welcoming and socially engaging that it's almost a sin not to shake hands or to hug somebody's neck or to engage them with warm, up close, friendly conversation. We don't greet the brethren with a holy kiss much but we shake hands, share pot luck snacks, come and participate in a close fellowship even though we may be contagious. We hold hands as we pray and sneeze and are sneezed

upon. To add to this dilemma are the wonderful people who are around us who may have compromised or lowered immune systems, maybe because of some treatment that they are taking or a health issue that they are battling. Maybe it's their age and being old or real young that put them in a critical group, but you may not have any idea who these people are because very few people wear a neon sign around their neck saying, "I have a compromised immune system." It's just a dilemma.

I was preaching at a church during this flu season and a couple that I had known many years ago came to the service though the wife was real sick. Before the service began, she and her husband came up to me and she hugged me and then said, "I sure don't want to spread any germs around but I was not going to miss being here today and hear you preach." What do you do? I thanked her for coming and assumed that her illness was affecting her brain. So what in the world can you do? Clearly, there are no simple solutions to get around illness or exposing others to illness. It is impossible to stop all of the activities and close all of the shops and stores and lock up

the churches and dismiss the schools. It's not going to happen, but some common sense can be applied that might be helpful. Let me give you three words that might be helpful.

The first thing you can do is to pray. God does care about our sicknesses and our wellness and I am confident that there are times when the only way I have been spared many of the illnesses going around is that God Himself has protected me. Have I ever been sick? Yes. Have I ever had the flu? Yes. But many more times, I have been amazed at having been exposed to so much sickness at churches and funerals, weddings and special events, hospitals and nursing homes, that God has literally protected me from getting sick and kept me going. I'm not talking about using prayer as the emergency room procedure, but more to stay open before God asking Him to give you wisdom for life and insights into what to avoid.

The second thing you can do is to stay. It is far better for one person to just stay at home from work or from church or from a public event rather than getting up and going in your sick condition and cause 15-30 others to have to miss because of you.

The third thing is to say. If you are sick and around someone, just say, "I don't think you need to get close to me because I've been battling whatever has been going around." Or maybe it would be good to say that I'm not going to be at the meeting, I'm not going to be at some gathering, simply because I'm afraid that I might give someone what I've got and what I've got I don't want them to have. Speak up and say I don't want you to get what I've had or I don't want to get what you have had. You can be a blessing by seeing folks and you can be a blessing by staying away from folks, so just say, "I'll keep my distance."

This flu season will pass, spring will arrive, things will be better. I just don't want you to pass before the seasons pass.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News



Personnel from the NASA DEVELOP National Program, an interdisciplinary research environment where applied science research projects are conducted under the guidance of NASA and partner science advisors, held a recruitment event for their internship program at the WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY Hattiesburg campus on January 22. Pictured are (left to right) NASA DEVELOP employees Georgina Crepps and Shelby Barrett, a Carey senior from Hattiesburg and a campus ambassador for the program, speaking to Carey student and current intern Brennan McDaniel of Oakdale, La., and interested Carey students Sawyer Walters of Hattiesburg and Nicolai Hutchinson of Picayune.

Staff Changes



STEELE CHURCH, SCOTT ASSOCIATION, has called Joey Smith as pastor. He is shown with his wife Denise.



MT. PLEASANT CHURCH, WEST, gave pastor Leon Holly a gift of appreciation Jan. 11. Holly accepted the pastorate of the church Jan., 2009, and has announced his second retirement after serving the church six years. Shown are deacon chairman Johnny McCreary, Geneva Holly, and Holly.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

February 5, 2015

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

MISSISSIPPI BLACK CHURCH

2015

JULY 16-18, 2015
MORRISON HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH
CLINTON, MISS.

To register call:

Mission Strategy Dept., (800) 748-1651, Ext. 231,
or (601) 292-3231

Early Registration: \$25 if registered by February 15, 2015

Registration:

\$50 after February 15, 2015

www.mbc.org/events



CHURCH BUILDING CONFERENCE

March 17, 2015

Baptist Building, Skyroom | 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

For more information contact the
Pastor/Leadership Development Dept.
at 601-292-3305.

MBCB STUDENT CONNECT CAMPS
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601-292-3283

3 CAMPS TO CHOOSE FROM IN 2015

SESSION I:

JUNE 8 – 11 CENTRAL HILLS RETREAT

SESSION II:

JUNE 11 – 14 CENTRAL HILLS RETREAT

SESSION III:

JUNE 15 – 18 BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

*CAMPS RUN ON THE FIRST DAY WITH REGISTRATION IN THE AM
AND END WITH BREAKFAST ON THE LAST DAY

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE

SERVING ONE ANOTHER

MARCH 23-24, 2015

GARAYWA CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER, CLINTON

For more information contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. at 800-748-1651, Ext. 305, or 601-292-3305.

MISSISSIPPI CHRISTIAN PERFORMING ARTS

2015

FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 27-28, 2015
COUNTRY WOODS BAPTIST CHURCH, BYRAM, MS

www.mbc.org
<http://mcpaf.weebly.com>

For more information contact the Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept., MBCB, 800-748-1651, Ext. 283, or 601-292-3283

Ministry Heart... **BOLD DISCIPLE**

Encourage your church librarian to get away from it all and join other librarians at the Church Library Ministry Retreat, "Ministry From the Heart...Building Blocks of a Bold Disciple" on March 27-28, 2015, at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, Clinton, Miss. Registration deadline is: March 13, 2015. Check out our Web for details and registration.

Link:
<http://www.mbc.org/businessservices/communication-services/church-library-ministry/>

For more information contact Communication Services at the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 378, or 601-292-3378, or E-mail at jchen@mbcb.org.

Mother Daughter
OVERNIGHT

Mother/Daughter is on April 10-11, 2015 at Garaywa Camp & Conference Center. We will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday and end at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday. You will be involved in events such as a missionary visit, worship, ropes course, crafts and much more. This is the perfect opportunity to get away from the world and invest in a 1st-6th grade girl in your life.

Registration forms are online at garaywa.org.

Cost= \$50 per person

Please call Garaywa Camp & Conference Center at 601-924-7034 for more information.

JOURNEY OFF THE MAP

2015 VBS

REGIONAL TRAINING
Time at all locations: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

- 4/23 Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Ridgeland
- 4/28 Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church, Meridian
- 4/30 North Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford
- 5/4 Crosspoint Community Church, Hattiesburg
- 5/5 First Baptist Church, Brookhaven

VBS Kick-Off
March 7, 2015
9 a.m. - noon
First Baptist Church, Richland

For more information contact the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at: 800-748-1651, Ext. 294, or 601-292-3294

SUPER SUMMER

MISSISSIPPI SUPER SUMMER

July 13-17, 2015
Mississippi College
Clinton, Miss.

Registration begins Feb. 1.

For costs and registration requirements visit our Web site
www.mssupersummer.com

For more information contact the Discipleship/Family Ministry
Department, MBCB, at 800-748-1651, Ext. 283, 601-292-3283.

1%



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292-3347, or E-mail lleavell@mbcb.org

Garaywa Camp & Conference Center Clinton, Miss.

Mississippi Missionary Fellowship

April 18, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Please register by Friday, April 10, 2015

Mississippi Missionary Parents Fellowship

April 17-18, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

Please register by Friday, April 10, 2015

For registration and more information contact
the MS WMU Office at 800-748-1651, Ext. 319,
or 601-292-3319.

WITNESSING THROUGH MEDIA

Awards Banquet & Workshop

March 20-21, 2015 | Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison, Mississippi

Awards Competition

- Entries in the Awards Competition must have been produced or aired between January 1, 2014 - January 1, 2015
- Award Entry Deadline is January 23, 2015
- Entry form and registration is online

Banquet and Workshop

- Banquet and Workshop Registration Deadline is March 6, 2015
- Registration for all activities (Banquet and Workshop) is: \$35 per person
- Friday Awards Banquet only or Saturday Workshop only is \$25 per person

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OASIS 2015

Missions Leaders,

Looking for your next missions project? Well, we hope you will consider the OASIS 2015 Project. On October 22-26, 2015, a retreat for single career missionaries will take place in Malaysia. The purpose of the retreat is to provide opportunities for worship, fellowship, and encouragement. More than 85% of the single missionaries serving in this area of the world are women. Since our missionaries attend this retreat at their own expense, we want to say "thank you" to them for their service by sponsoring their participation in the retreat this year. The cost per person is \$900 and this includes all their expenses. All donors will be provided the name (or initials) of a missionary so you can pray for them during the retreat. **THE DEADLINE to participate is April 2, 2015.** Because of the logistics of this event (plane tickets, etc. ...) an early deadline had to be set. Thank you for understanding!

We hope that you will prayerfully lead your group or church to help sponsor a missionary to attend this year's OASIS event. This is an opportunity for us to remind these singles that they have not been forgotten and that we are indeed holding the ropes for them. For more information contact **Ken Rhodes, Director of Missions Mobilization for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**, at krhodes@mbcb.org, or 800-748-1651, Ext. 398. Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Mail donations to:
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OASIS 2015
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205

Pray this day for...

February 6 - 19, 2015

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16 (ESV)

Pray for: **Richard & Martha Beal**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Laurie Bledsoe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kaye Brooks**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Donald & Donna Brown**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Karen Brown**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through nursing.

Pray for: **John & Claudia Brown**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: **Matthew Burks**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Pamela Cariton**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Richard & Wanda Clark**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Rebekah Clark**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through youth evangelism.

Pray for: **Cindy Demars**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Guy DeMars**, missionary ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through hospital coordination.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

GOING DEEPER

9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

February 7, 2015

Central

Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon

February 21, 2015

North/South

FBC, Tupelo/Marion BA, Columbia

State Literacy Missions Conference
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Garaywa Camp and Conference
Center, Clinton

For more information contact the WMU at 800-748-1651,

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Mr. Drew Williams - 4/1/93
Parents: Matt & Shea
Last Frontier

Miss Lindsey Williams
4/27/01
Parents: Matt & Shea
Last Frontier

Mr. Micah Milam - 4/2/96
Parents: Andy & Michelle
European Peoples

Miss Brooklyn - 4/6/09
Parents: J & M
Restricted

Mr. A.S. - 4/11/12
Parents: S & M
Last Frontier

Mr. Benjamin White - 4/16/12
Parents: David & Regina
American Peoples

Mr. Ethan Milam - 4/17/01
Parents: Andy & Michelle
European Peoples

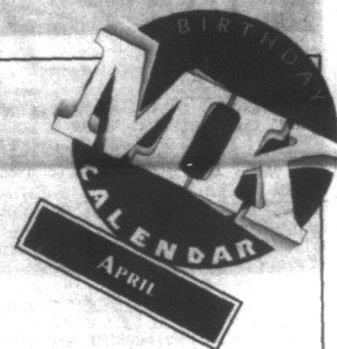
Miss E.S. - 4/26/05
Parents: S & M
Last Frontier

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Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.



HOUSE TOPS

BIBL i O C I P H E R

X ND FYV AJZ JQ NWHNYND NIZ FYV

AJZ JQ XENNO, NIZ FYV AJZ JQ

GNOJW? AJZ XE IJF FYV AJZ JQ FYV

ZVNZ, WMF JQ FYV CXKXIA.

DNFFYVL FLVIFR-FLJ: FYXHFR-FLJ

Clue: A = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Malachi 2:9

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EUPORA IS SEEKING A PART-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER. Please send resumes to FBC Eupora, P.O. Box 268, Eupora, MS 39744 or email resumes to firstbaptistc57@bellsouth.net. For more information, call the church office at (662) 258-3491.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLINS, IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTRY ASSISTANT with experience in Quickbooks, business, and other church-related software. Anyone with such experience who is interested in this position may call the church at 601-765-6279 or e-mail the church at secretary@fbcollins.com.

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CLASSIFIEDS

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LifeWay Research study: lack of diversity OK with church-goers

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Nearing the midway point of the second decade of the twenty-first century, churches remain one of the most racially-segregated institutions in American life with more than eight in 10 congregations made up of one predominant racial group, a LifeWay Research study shows.

Most worshipers, according to the study, seem to like it that way. Two-thirds of American churchgoers say their church has done enough to become racially diverse and less than half think their church should become more diverse.

Those are among the findings of a study of church segregation by Nashville-based LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources. Researchers surveyed 994 churchgoers who attend worship at least at holidays or more often. They also surveyed 1,000 Americans as well as 1,000 Protestant senior pastors.

Status quo

Churchgoers, researchers found, are lukewarm about diversity. More than half disagree with the statement, "My church needs to become more ethnically diverse," while four in 10 agree. A third strongly disagree that their church needs to be more diverse. Forty-two percent felt strongly their church was doing enough.

Evangelicals (71%) are most likely to say their church is diverse enough, while whites (37%) are least likely to say their church should become more diverse. African Americans (51%) and Hispanic Americans (47%) were more likely to say their church needs to be more diverse.

"Surprisingly, most churchgoers are content with the ethnic status quo in their churches," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research. "In a world where our culture is increasingly diverse, and many pastors are talking about diversity, it appears most people are happy where they are — and with whom they are."

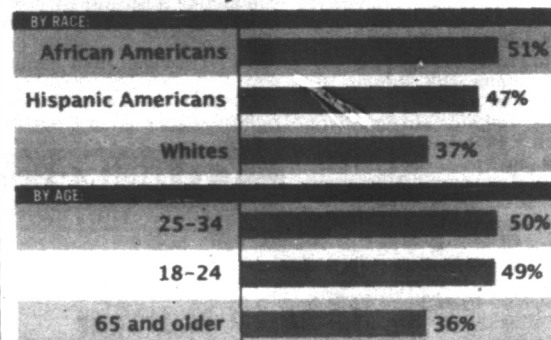
Comfortably segregated?

Not long after giving his "I Have A Dream" speech during the March on Washington in 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. was invited to lecture on race at Western Michigan University. In a question-and-answer session after the lecture, King said Christians in the United States fail to live out the tenets of their faith.

CHURCH SEGREGATION VIEWS AMONG CHURCHGOERS

Percent who agree with statement:

"My church needs to become more ethnically diverse."



LifeWayResearch.com

LifeWay

"We must face the fact that in America, the church is still the most segregated major institution in America. At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation. This is tragic."

A previous study of Protestant pastors by LifeWay Research found more than 86% have congregations with one predominant racial group. The National Congregations Study found a similar lack of diversity in houses of worship.

As part of the study on segregation, LifeWay Research also surveyed 1,000 Americans about race. They found only 34% of Americans have regularly attended a house of worship where they were a minority. Among those who had attended a church as a minority, one in five said their ethnicity hindered their involvement. Of those who have not been a minority in church, 22% say being a minority in a congregation would make them feel uncomfortable.

Still, many Americans believe churches should be more diverse. Half agree with the statement, "Churches in America are too segregated." Forty-four percent disagree.

"It's fair to say churchgoers in communities with little ethnic diversity perhaps cannot relate to a multi-ethnic expectation," Stetzer said, "but in urban settings, other ethnic groups are not far away."

Pastors and diversity

In a survey of 1,000 Protestant senior pastors, LifeWay Research found many have some diversity in their professional and social circles.

Eight-four percent say they have spoken with a friend from a different ethnic group within the last week. Sixty-three percent say they've met with ministers from another ethnic group in the past month.

Still, for many pastors, the issue of racial reconciliation seldom comes up in sermons. Forty-three percent say they speak on the issue once a year or less. Twenty-nine percent of pastors rarely or never do. Thirty-five percent speak on the issue several times a year. In addition, one in five speak about race at least once a month.

"The Bible talks a lot about men and women from every tongue, tribe, and nation being in heaven, so it might be good to get accustomed to that heavenly expression here and now," Stetzer said.

Previous LifeWay Research studies have found nearly 72% of Protestant senior pastors say their church is personally involved in racial reconciliation. Ninety percent say racial reconciliation is mandated by the Gospel.

Researchers also found most Americans (82%) believe diversity is good for the country. Three quarters of Americans say the country has made progress on race relations, but eight in 10 say there is still a long way to go.

EVANGELISM

cont. from p. 1

Some even called to tell me that they wouldn't be able to come but wanted to be there.

"Several pastors cancelled activities at their church Sunday night and brought their people to worship at Brandon Church. They are realizing that the conference has value to them and are making it a priority event. We want pastors to leave encouraged and to take what they received back home."

Conference speakers included:

- Phil Hoskins, Kingsport, Tenn.

- Jonathan Falwell, Thomas Road Church, Lynchburg, Va.

- Junior Hill, Junior Hill Ministries, Hartselle, Ala.

- Tommy Green, First Church, Brandon, Fla.

- Jim Futral, Executive Director-Treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

- James Merritt, Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, Ga.

Lavon Gray, First Church, Jackson, led worship, utilizing musicians from First Church and others.

Hoskins preached Sunday night and at the opening session Monday morning. Using Matthew 16:13 and following, he shared there were three things we can't afford to lose. "The news for Mississippi Baptists is that the church is alive and well because the Founder is alive and well. We can't afford to lose our convictions; we can't afford to lose our character; and we can't afford to lose our compassion."

Continuing, Hoskins said, "The one missing ingredient in most Baptist churches is we've lost our compassion. We've forgotten how to care. We don't have

'target groups' in our church - we preach 'whoever will.'"

Falwell used Acts 28, Philippians 4, and Daniel 6 as his texts. Referring to the gates of hell, Falwell said that the church needs to be spending less time inside the building and spend time going out and knocking down those gates. "The church needs to rise up and do what the church needs to do," Falwell said. Speaking of unity from Philippians 4, he said, "We need to get over whatever it is that keeps us from getting along. The reason we aren't more effective in the community is because we can't figure out how to get along in the church."

Hill preached from Psalm 37:1 - 4. "God's people are more anxious and distressed right now than at any time in

my 60 years of preaching," he said. "The values I taught my children and my mama and daddy taught me are now being scoffed at. So what are we to do in bad times?"

Responding to his own question, Hill stated that "We are to refrain from fretting ... we are to rely on God's faithfulness ... Fretting corrupts your spirit. Fretful folks make life miserable for everyone. A child of God should have joy. We have a choice as to how we act."

Green asked, "Do we want to be counted worthy of our salvation and our calling?" Using Acts 5:41, he said, "Are their things in our ministry that are after-market add-ons? Do we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to? What happens when we try to please men instead of God? We get caught

up with 'doing' and 'having' rather than being in the presence of God."

Futral preached from 2 Kings 2:9, dealing with Elijah and Elisha. One of the men had a double portion, Futral noted. "Six times the Bible talks about a double portion, a double portion of God's spirit. Not a double portion of activities or stuff, but of His spirit."

"The God of Elijah, the God we're committed to, is not absent. I AM sent Moses. That's the God of Elijah, always in the present tense, and He's where you are."

Merritt used Luke 5:27-31 as his text. "The most inclusive club in the world is followers of Jesus. The only qualification is that you have to be a missing person. Anyone who is far from God can be invited to get near

to God. God has an amber alert all over the world for people who are without Jesus."

"The best the world has to offer you is trash compared to what Jesus can offer you," Merritt said.

Lum had high praise for the host church, especially noting the complimentary meal prepared for approximately 600 people. "Brandon Church and its people did a phenomenal job," he said. "We've been blessed to have churches that not only offer their facilities but offer themselves."

Continuing, Lum said, "I just marvel when God shows up. Some people were profoundly influenced and encouraged, and wanted to go home to make a difference."

Next year's Evangelism Conference will be Jan. 31 - Feb. 1 at Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth.

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins
and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my sins
and to restore my relationship
with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ
into my life. From this time on,
I want to live in a loving relationship
with Him. (I receive Christ as
my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Get an Understanding • Nehemiah 8:1-8

Introduction

The Book of Nehemiah almost divides into halves. The first six chapters record Nehemiah's toil to restore Jerusalem's infrastructure (physical). The last seven chapters record Nehemiah's troubles to restart the Jews' walk with God (spiritual).

1. The spiritual is harder than the physical.

Consider, as an example, parenting. To have a baby is Biology 101; easy enough that children (teenagers) can have children.

To rear a child, however, is both an art and a science. It requires the commitment of parents as well as the investment of many others. In 1993 (our daughter's birth) and 1995 (our son's birth), I quickly learned that being a dad was more challenging than writing a dissertation or serving as a pastor!

2. The physical is important, but the spiritual is more important.

Before Ezra read the law, a wooden podium had been built for his use (8:4). It, in part, symbolizes the months of manual labor preceding those six hours when Ezra read the law (8:3).

Nothing that Nehemiah and his fellow workmen had done mattered more than what Ezra did. "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Dt. 8:3, ESV). Nevertheless, without the physical security (walls) and political stability that persuaded returning Jews to remain

in Judah, few would have been present to hear Ezra. "Man does not live by bread alone," but man still needs bread.

Commentary: Nehemiah 8:1-3

The Old Testament shows that God's people knew better, but they did not do better, exhibiting both kinds of misconduct: sins of commission (doing what is wrong) and sins of omission (failing to do what is right; see Jas. 4:17). As a result, starting again spiritually became a recurring theme.

Israel's sins of omission were as shocking as their sins of commission. In the wilderness, they did not circumcise any newborn (Jos. 5:1-8). In the Promised Land, they did not celebrate Passover (2 Kg. 23:21-23; 2 Chr. 30:1-27; 35:1-19) nor observe the sabbatical year (2 Chr. 36:11-21) as prescribed. The Book of Jeremiah even recounts how the nation provoked the Lord when, during a sabbatical year, they broke their promise to comply (34:8-22).

Years ago, Vance Havner (1901-1986) remarked, "In a day when the living faith of the dead has become the dead faith of

the living, just as America needs to get back to the Constitution, so the church needs to return to the cross and the Bible." For the Jews coming home, getting back to the basics meant obeying God; specifically, what he had divulged through Moses.

The phrases "book of the law of Moses" (8:1) and "book of the law" (8:3; see also 8:18; 9:3) occur throughout the Old Testament (Dt. 28:61; 29:21; 30:10; 31:26; Jos. 1:8; 8:31, 34; 23:6; 24:26; 2 Kg. 14:6; 22:8, 11; 2 Chr. 17:9; 34:14-15). Both phrases refer to the Torah or Pentateuch: from Genesis to Deuteronomy.

Heeding the law necessitated hearing it again (Rom. 10:17). Consequently, the people, both young and old, gathered at a square in front of the Water Gate. The Water Gate derived its name from a nearby water source, the Gihon Spring (1 Kg. 1:32-48; 2 Chr. 32:30).

Explore the Bible

with Ivan Parke



("those who could understand," NASB) and old, gathered at a square in front of the Water Gate. The Water Gate derived its name from a nearby water source, the Gihon Spring (1 Kg. 1:32-48; 2 Chr. 32:30).

Commentary: Nehemiah 8:4-8

When, while standing, Ezra opened the scripture, the people stood too. Centuries later, Luke mentions the same respectful tradition for God's word: Jesus at the syna-

gogue in Nazareth stood to read the Isaiah scroll (4:16-17).

As Ezra read, the people responded wholeheartedly: "lifting up their hands" (8:6), "bowed low" (8:6), "worshiped" (8:6), and "weeping" (8:9). 2 Kings 22-23 and 2 Chronicles 34 report a comparable response to the book of the law being read when King Josiah reigned.

Conclusion

Nehemiah 8 presents an opportunity to rethink the law. Why do Christians steer clear of it? One reason is that mean-spirited Pharisees personified it. Another reason is that "law" has become a synonym for "works salvation." Neither reason is legitimate.

The Pharisees certainly abused God's law, interpreting it legalistically. Jesus, therefore, denounced them (Mt. 23:1-36). Fulfilling the law (Mt. 5:17), he rejected their interpretation (Mk. 7:5-13). For Jesus, the Pharisees and the law were not one and the same.

Paul clearly explained the law's purpose. God never intended it to save us (Rom. 7:7-25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Gal. 3:15-29). Abraham is proof that "grace through faith" has been the only plan of salvation (Gal. 3:1-14).

Parke is professor, Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy, Mississippi College, and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Ready When Sex Destroys • Ephesians 5:1-10

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000, "worldview" means: 1. the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world. 2. a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group. Things like philosophy, religion, morality, and ethics are only some of the things which make up a person's belief system. What you believe not only defines your character but your actions are defined by your belief system. Is your worldview Biblical? Philipians 2:5 states: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (KJV). A Biblical worldview means we are to think like Christ. Where do we learn to think like Christ? Act like Christ? Love like Christ? By dwelling upon His Word (Psalm 119:9-10) and allowing it to transform our thinking, our opinions, and our actions. The last three lessons of this quarter will deal with sexual immorality. Today's lesson will focus on learning to walk in Christ's love rather than in impurity.

Despite Paul's relatively long stay in Ephesus (three years), Christianity faced serious challenges from other religions and philosophies of the day. He wrote this letter to once again lay out the basics of the faith and to reestablish the believers in the truths and lifestyle of life in Christ, regardless of the prevailing social norms around them" (Lifeway). Ephesians 5:1-10 (ESV), gives us three points to consider regarding purity.

Point #1: There is the conduct of purity (vss. 1-4). "Therefore be imitators of God..." this literally means to mimic God. He is holy and we are to be imitators of his holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). This demands adherence to certain stringent rules regarding worship and general conduct, but it also requires a complete commitment of will and motive to the Lord's commandments (Ex. 19:6; Lev. 18:6-23; 20:10-21).¹ Our conduct is to imitate His great love. If you are God's beloved child then you will walk in love (1 John 4:8; Rom. 5:8-10, 2 Peter 1:4) because you were bought with a great price (2 Cor. 5:21; John 15:13; Rom. 5:10). Therefore

"immorality, or any impurity, or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints." You have been set apart (1 Pet. 2:9). Then there is to be the conduct of pure conversation... "no filthiness, silly talk or coarse jesting... but rather giving of thanks (Col. 3:8). What is pure... we are to think on these things (Phil 4:8) for out of the mouth comes what is in the heart (Matt. 15:18). Nancy Leigh DeMoss writes, "Regardless of how spiritual we may claim

(or pretend) to be, the truth is that we are no more spiritual than our sexual conduct and thought life."²

Point #2: There are the consequences of impurity (vss. 5-6). With a resounding, "For this you know with certainty" writes Paul, "that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God." Warren Wiersbe comments on this passage: "Paul made it clear that people who deliberately and persistently live in

sin will not share in God's kingdom.

These warnings deal with the habitual practice of sin, and not the occasional act

of sin."³ We are saved by grace, but it is not a license to continue in sin (Rom. 6). We are called to walk in wisdom (Eph. 5:15-17) and to guard ourselves against moral failure. In the book of Proverbs the reader is warned constantly of the danger of sexual impurity.

Point #3: The call to purity (vss. 7-10) is to walk in the light. Before salvation you were formerly walking in darkness. But after salvation "you are Light in the Lord".

Take time to read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 for a parallel passage that explains the contrasts that exist between the child of God and those who walk in darkness. Then because we walk in the light, "the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (1 John 1:5-7). The fruit which is produced is moral excellence of heart, righteous behavior and truthfulness (honesty and integrity). The phrase 'trying to learn' carries the idea of testing or proving to learn by clear and convincing evidence what is truly honoring to God (John MacArthur Study Bible). This week take time to make a list of positive motivations which comes to those who choose to be morally pure: #1: because I love God. This is the starting point of developing a Biblical worldview.

"I know of no sin that will do more to deaden a man's spiritual vitality than the sin of moral impurity." —Del Fehsenfeld, Jr.

¹ www.biblestudytools.com — Immorality, Sexual — Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology Online.

² Sexual Purity: The Joy of Moral Freedom, from Seeking Him Devotional Series by Nancy Leigh DeMoss, ©2013.

³ www.books.google.com — Be Rich (Ephesians): Gaining the Things Money Can't Buy by Warren Wiersbe

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.

CAUSE

cont. from p. 1

same sex marriage in their comments, an apparent indication that

Latter-day Saints will maintain their view of marriage as only between a man and a woman.

"The so-called religious exemption is the size of five Mack trucks. It entirely neutered their proposal," said Fred Sainz, vice president of

communications and marketing at the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), according to The Washington Post. HRC is the country's leading LGBT organization.

The Mormons are "demanding broad and unnecessary religious exemptions that hurt LGBT people and families," said Sarah

Kate Ellis, president of GLAAD (formerly the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), in a written statement. "The 'compromise' is that the Mormon Church

will support non-discrimination only if it won't have to follow laws that require equal treatment of LGBT people. This is not a 'compromise,' it's a compromising of fairness and basic respect for LGBT people."

Just for the Record



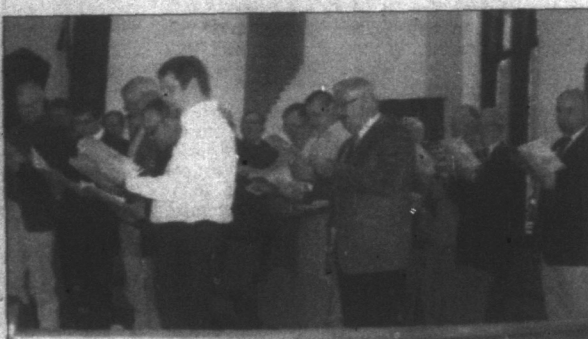
HOLMESVILLE CHURCH, PIKE ASSOCIATION, ordained three new deacons Jan. 18. Shown are Alcus Kyzar with wife Sue, Wade Guy with wife Renee, and Jerry Nickles with wife Louise. Lee Mathis, pastor.



NORTH UNION CHURCH, ATTALA ASSOCIATION, recently dedicated their new education building. The project included some contract labor but was completed primarily by volunteers from the church family. The building is debt-free. Pastor Ladell Blanton led the dedication service.



CARROLLTON CHURCH, CARROLLTON, presented the Christmas cantata, He is Here. Shown is minister of music Bernard Taylor conducting.



The men of **CARROLLTON CHURCH, CARROLLTON**, filled the choir in celebration of Baptist Men's Day Jan. 25. Fletcher Moorman, pastor.



The GA's of **ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, earned the chef badge during the month of January. Shown are the participants. Lorrie Lofton and Leigh Reed, leaders; Matthew Green, pastor.



The **LAUDERDALE CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S JOB CORPS** held a celebration honoring the first class of participants Nov. 13, 2014. Shown from left are Heather Varner, Katie Clark, Faye Glass, Rita Ferguson, and Leah McCollugh. Teachers were Donna Temple, Bible study; Beth Sharp, Jobs for Life; and Steve LaBoe, Intro to Computers. Linda Spence, site coordinator; Shelly Findley, assistant.



GRANDVIEW CHURCH, PEARL, held their annual Christmas party for residents at Whitfield State Hospital.



NEW HOME CHURCH, SMITH COUNTY, ordained Ed Schumacher and Ronnie McCrory as deacons during fall, 2014.

In other Church News:

➤ **First Church, Stonewall**, is hosting a marriage enrichment weekend Feb. 13 - 14. Fri., 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., including supper; Sat., 9 a.m. - noon, including breakfast. Wayne and Tina Hudson, speakers. Cost, \$20. Call (601) 659-7607 for registration.

➤ **First Church, Runnelstown**, will host The McKameys in concert Feb. 13, 7 p.m. Love offering.

➤ **First Church, Eupora**, will host The Steeles in concert Feb. 14, 7 p.m. Love offering.

➤ **Hillcrest Church, New Albany**, is hosting Night to Shine prom for people with special needs Feb. 13, 6 - 9 p.m. This event is happening in 50 different cities across the country simultaneously and is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Guests will receive a VIP treatment including flowers, hair and makeup, professional photography, food, games and more. The church is assembling a team of volunteers to assist. To volunteer, refer a child, or to donate visit www.hillcrestministries.com or call (662) 534-4821.



Steve Roark

member of the American Association Of Christian COUNSELORS and in the referral network for Focus on the Family

- 3 two hour sessions
- Topics include spiritual leadership, conflict resolution, personality types, realistic expectations and commitment.
- I have been married for 37 years

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